

# So What's The Big Deal?



*A carpet of pachysandra spreads across the forest floor, pushing out the native species and dominating the landscape.*

The difference between a regular, happy-go-lucky plant and an invasive plant is that an invasive plant will aggressively reproduce and

negatively affect the ecology of a natural area. Invasive species have three main types of effects on native species:

- ◆ fewer native plants
- ◆ less healthy wildlife
- ◆ less predictability of how a natural area is going to react to a fire, flood or management activity.

**Doing nothing could be expensive.** Experts agree that non-native, invasive species are the second most serious threat to the quality of natural areas and their ability to support wildlife (habitat loss is the top threat). Scientists estimate that invasive species are present in over 100 million acres of the U.S., or an area roughly the size of California, with 14 million new acres, or an area about half the size of Virginia, infested every year! Recent studies have estimated the cost of invasive species at more than \$100 billion a year. Over the last 30 years, invasive species have slowly taken a firm foothold in our area.

## *If not you, who?*

### **Don't plant invasive species!**

Ask before you plant or before you allow someone else to plant an unfamiliar species in your yard. Invasive plants are often labeled as "aggressive" or "matures rapidly."



## Care, Educate, Inspire

Stewardship is about working together to care for the environmental and cultural resources of Fairfax County. People become stewards for different reasons. They may want to help ensure clean water and air. They may wish to share something with their children. They may be inspired by spiritual beliefs. Whatever prompts our commitment, it is easy to take an active role in stewardship. It can be a small and simple thing, or it can be much bigger. Either way, it all adds up to a Fairfax County that looks to its past with pride and to its future with confidence.

You can learn more about Fairfax County Stewardship, the Board of Supervisor's 20-year environmental vision and the Fairfax County Park Authority at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/stewardship](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/stewardship)



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## Fairfax County Stewardship



## Invasive Backyard Plants

## Ten Backyard Invaders



C. Bright

### Burning Bush

The wings on the stems make this plant really easy to spot – that and the brilliant red fall color. Birds eat the fruit and spread the plant into the forest.

**Suggested control:** Prevent fruits from forming by pruning off all flowers or remove the entire plant.

### Multiflora Rose

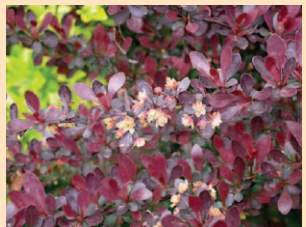
Multiflora rose is a prickly plant once recommended as “good fencing.” Now it keeps people and wildlife out of the forest.

**Suggested control:** Remove all plant material, including roots.



C. Bright

### Japanese Barberry



Japanese barberry doesn’t get eaten by deer, and therefore lots of people plant it. However, birds eat the berries and “plant” it in the forest where it doesn’t belong.

**Suggested control:** Prevent fruits from forming by pruning off all flowers or remove the entire plant.

### If not you, who? Do plant native species!

Find out about the local native plants from nurseries, websites and public gardens. Links are available at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/stewardship](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/stewardship)



### Autumn Olive

My mother always said if you’ve got nothing nice to say, don’t say anything at all.

**Suggested control:** Remove all plant material, including roots. Pruning worsens the problem.

### Privet

If you want to create a solid wall of vegetation that doesn’t allow anything through, privet is your best bet. But that doesn’t make any sense for natural areas!

**Suggested control:** Prevent fruits from forming by pruning off all flowers or remove the entire plant.



C. Bright



C. Bright

### Bradford Pear

Bradford pear escapes more frequently than Houdini ever did. Puffy white clouds of flowers stand out in the spring landscape, but the indistinct

green leaves can make it hard to identify in summer.

**Suggested control:** Tree must be cut down.

### Pachysandra

If you want a ground cover that is unpleasant and very aggressive, pachysandra is the one for you! The dense carpet formed by



G. Noe

pachysandra keeps the diversity of native wildflowers from our forests.

**Suggested control:** Remove all plant material, including roots.



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### Bamboo

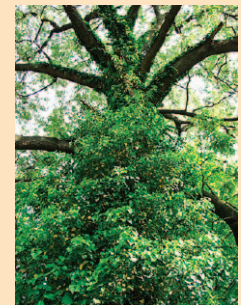
There is nothing lucky about this bamboo. Dense bamboo infestations like this one prevent all native plants and most native wildlife from flourishing.

**Suggested control:** Remove all plant material, including roots. This may be difficult, so repeated efforts will be necessary.

### English Ivy

Let’s leave the ivy at the ivy league! English ivy can kill the trees that it grows on.

**Suggested control:** Keep ivy under control or remove it entirely. Prevent ivy from spreading across horizontal and vertical surfaces. Do not compost clippings.



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### Oriental Bittersweet



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This strangling vine with bright red fruit will quickly turn into the biggest pest in the garden. Oriental bittersweet can kill anything it climbs on.

**Suggested control:** Remove all plant material, including roots. Make sure clippings are disposed of with the trash so they won’t be composted.